



THE VERDICT OF INDIA



By
**SIR MANCHERJEE
M. BHOWNAGGREGEE,
K.C.I.E.**



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BY

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FOREWORD.

One of the methods by which Germany has indulged her hatred of the British nation is by roundly accusing it of having grossly misgoverned India. To justify that accusation, propagandist literature has been widely distributed in all quarters of the globe by German official writers during the last two years. The people of India have laughed to scorn this grotesque attempt, but as practically it is in their name or at least in their interest the German pretends to indulge in this abuse of the English, it is high time that their own verdict should be pronounced on the case, so that other nations may be enabled to realise what hideous fictions are sought to be passed off on them.

M. M. BHOWNAGREE.

177, CROMWELL ROAD,

September, 1916.

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BY

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INDIA'S RESPONSE TO THE CALL OF WAR.

Within a couple of hours of the declaration of war between Great Britain and Germany on the 4th of August, 1914, there happened to meet at a West End Club in London a number of prominent British Indian gentlemen, who usually foregathered there every afternoon, and there naturally arose among them the consideration of the position of India in relation to the war. Some of these gentlemen were more or less permanently resident in England, but the majority were visitors, not a few among them being men occupying public positions of distinction in their country, prominent members of the Indian National Congress, all of them belonging to that section of the Indian populace known as "educated

Indians," who have always been the fearless critics of the Indian administration, and have come to be regarded as occupying the same position in relation to it as does the Opposition in Parliament. In fact, they represented all shades of political opinion, Pro-British, Moderate, Extremist, and even Anti-British.

From the lips of all there assembled, there sprung one accordant expression, viz. :—that India's princes and peoples would, on learning of the titanic struggle in which the Kaiser of Germany had sought to engage their Sovereign, place all their resources, their armies, and even their own lives, in support of British arms. So confirmed were they in this conviction, that without waiting even for the few hours in which the telegraph would bring them the news of the actual feeling aroused in India, they, one and all, resolved to incur the heavy responsibility of becoming the spokesmen in public of the thoughts and sentiments of upwards of three hundred millions of their countrymen, and entrusted me with the drafting of an address to His Majesty giving expression to that conviction. By mid-

night on the same day the following address was engrossed, and transmitted over a large number of signatures to the Secretary of State for India for submission to His Majesty :

“ At the present juncture, when the forces and armaments of the British Empire are called upon to defend the nations in alliance with His Majesty and to protect the vital interests of his vast Dominions against the aggressive action of a foreign power, we, the subjects of His Majesty’s Indian Empire, who are now residing in the Metropolis, feel it our duty and privilege to express what we believe to be the prevailing feeling throughout India—namely, a sincere desire for the success of British Arms in the struggle.

“ We have not the slightest doubt that, as on previous occasions when the British forces were engaged in defending the interests of the Empire, so on the present, the princes and people of India will readily and willingly co-operate to the best of their ability and opportunities in securing that end by placing the resources of their country at His Majesty’s disposal.

“ We wish it to be clearly understood that, whatever differences on questions affecting the internal administration of our country might exist in peaceful times, the devotion of the people of India to the British Throne in the face of an external foe is bound to ensure such a feeling of harmony and internal peace that they can have no other thought than that of being united with the British nation in a whole-hearted endeavour to secure a speedy victory for the Empire.

“ With our fervent prayer that, by the blessing of God, this object may be realised before long, we beg your lordship to submit to His Majesty this respectful expression of our loyal sentiments.”

Not many hours elapsed before the confirmation of these sentiments was flashed across the ocean by the whole body of India’s ruling Chiefs, by powerful associations, by all classes and sections of the people of India. Usually divided in innumerable castes, customs, religions, languages, at that momentous juncture in the Empire’s history and fate they all united in the one simple cry : “ For the British Empire.” How the swords of

valiant Rajahs, and of the gallant Indian Army, were unsheathed at that moment, how associations of men, often engaged in controversy with Government on administrative measures, met in public to express their loyalty, how persons of different religious beliefs assembled in their temples to pray for the success of Britain's cause, how women in large towns and small villages, many of them out of the purdah and the zenana, banded together to work night and day to prepare supplies for Britain's soldiers without distinction of race and creed,—all these are matters of history, all pointing to the one solid conclusion, that India in all her diverse phases of sentiment and activity had leapt to new life, co-operating heart and soul from the first moment of Britain's call to arms with Britain's sons and daughters.

GERMANY'S EXPECTATION.

It has been said, not without much reason, that among the calculations of the German Kaiser in entering light-heartedly upon a war with Great Britain was the assumption that India was disaffected to British rule, and that at a

time of crisis she would go into open revolt. A prudent statesman, misled into such a belief, would have, in face of these evidences of India's attitude as briefly summarised above, realised how mistaken he was in cherishing that hallucination, and taken serious account of the mighty forces that had been stirred, not, as he wished and hoped, against, but in support of the British. If he and his advisers had formed a correct estimate of that manifestation, it is not unlikely that their policy and methods in the conduct of the war might have undergone a salutary modification, their frantic ardour for its prosecution might have been cooled, the pursuit of the cruel and fantastic enterprise on which they were bent might have even been arrested.

But it was not to be. They were evidently obsessed with the idea that in spite of all the professions and practical proofs of India's adhesion to the British Throne, she could be counted on to add to its difficulties in a time of grave peril, that she was one of those weak links in the chain of the Empire on the snapping of which they reckoned for the ultimate

fulfilment of their ambition to effect its humiliation and possibly dismemberment. It is now scarcely to be doubted that within the sphere of the wide ramifications they had so cleverly spread over the countries of their potential enemies for years past in order to spy out their weak spots, India had occupied no inconsiderable space. Exaggerated reports of unrest, misconstruction of the differences between the Government and the leaders of the people with regard to official measures, even puerile tales of grievances against the administration were the pabulum which they greedily swallowed, oblivious of the fact that such symptoms are inherent in every country, all the more in those of such extent and of such diversified populations as those which the term "British Empire" connotes. In their highly developed military mentality which seems to have obscured their political vision, they hastily concluded from these indications that India was ready and willing to break away from British rule. To that hope they seem to have clung ever since.

GERMANY'S ABUSE OF THE BRITISH.

Under this fond belief they have persistently continued in the last two years with increasing energy to spread reports both in India and foreign countries about the alleged misgovernment of the country by the British. They have undertaken from the first day of the war a propaganda to disparage the British, to inflame the minds of the people of India, and to excite neutral countries to a sense of horror at the alleged misgovernment of that country. A regular flood of literature has emanated from official German sources with this deliberate purpose in view ; and while one cannot but admire the versatility of its composers, since every known critic of British rule in India for a century past has been adroitly misquoted, and every evil, however trifling, laid at its door has been intelligently amplified, it is some satisfaction to reflect that the exaggeration and distortion employed in this malignant work were such as to defeat its own end. “*Indien unter der britischen Faust*” is the title of one such production ; another is headed “*De Englische Overheerschung*

in Indie," and so on over a long continuous series of pamphlets and handbills, spread broadcast throughout various countries, to invoke their hatred towards the British, and to justify the humane German nation for undertaking the punishment and humiliation of the perfidious Briton for having been the cause of so much evil and misery to the people of England's colonies in general and of India in particular ! An excited party in a conflict is always apt to overstate his case and never recognises that by that very exaggeration he puts himself out of court. The German at present is overwrought and highly inflamed, and no wonder that he fails to see that his fierce diatribes against his foe have no bearing on the direct issue between them but betray his own weakness and malice. No impartial and intelligent judge can be influenced by his one-sided and transparently malicious indictments. At the same time it cannot be denied that there are in neutral and other countries, which have not been brought into touch with India, large masses of people who, if they heard only one side of the case, might be led to place some credence on accusations

of this kind, and one purpose of this brochure is to place before them the plain facts of the case.

But another and by far the more important object is to find out what the party most concerned in these allegations, the people of India, have themselves to say regarding the German allegations. The primary motive of those allegations is not hidden ; it is to show to the world as one of the principal causes of the German challenge to the British nation that that nation has been a curse to humanity in that it has betrayed its obligation to govern more than three hundred millions of human beings according to the dictates of a beneficent rule, and that consequently the Kaiser holds himself justified in attempting to wrest from it some “ places in the Sun,” of which it possesses so many and himself none. Divested of all sophistry and pretensions, this is the German claim, and this is the plea for it ; the main witness, nay the jury, between the two parties being the people of India, called in support of the indictment by the Germans themselves. In fact to India the Kaiser has appealed, unto India shall he go.

THE ACCUSATIONS.

In an investigation of this nature, it would be a fruitless task to go over the one-sided catalogue of German accusations against British rule during the two centuries of its prevalence over India, as they mainly consist of what has been left undone, without taking any note of what has been done, and some trivial instances of personal hardships or grievances such as in all countries political societies and associations recognise and discuss and appeal to their government to redress. The only charge which to one unacquainted with the conditions of India might seem to be a grave one is in relation to the sufferings caused by natural visitations such as famines and plague, the causes of which are beyond human control, in regard to which, as everyone knows, human ingenuity and activity can only avail to modify their severity and limit their extent. To hold the Government of a country responsible for such unfortunate dispensations is mendacious and childish, and yet the German pamphlets are full of the most hideous descriptions of the sufferings of the people by famines, duly illustrated with pictures of emaciated

men and women and groups of corpses, thereby insinuating and even asserting that they portrayed the results of British rule in India ! The true test of the capacity and humanity of a Government in respect of such catastrophes is the measures it has adopted and the efforts it has made to remedy the sufferings caused thereby, to arrest their prevalence, and to minimise as far as human endeavour can the chances of their recurrence. Not even an enemy of the British, provided he is honest, can assert that, judged by this test, the administrators of India have neglected to combat these misfortunes to the best of their ability. Opinions may differ and complaints arise as to the efficiency of a particular policy or methods to cope with them ; grant even that mistakes may have been made in the attempt ; but to fasten the causes of such natural visitations on the Government of India and to charge them with deliberate neglect and failure to remedy or mitigate the sufferings of the victims, as the German accusers attempt to do, bespeaks a depraved intellect lost to all sense of honesty and truth.

GERMANY'S MOTIVES FOR THE ATTACK.

But even German ingenuity has not succeeded in concealing the motives of these attacks. Here and there from under the thick surface of sympathy and compassion for a people alleged to be down-trodden by the British is revealed the intention at the back of the German mind. In "Das Britische Weltreich," the writer thinks that though the increasing cry of "India for the Indians," and the growing revolutionary movements conjured up by his imagination have *in themselves* little prospect of immediate success, "they might very well be successful, if they were supported by a serious attack on British power from without" (pp. 30-31). He goes on to admit that there are insuperable obstacles to the invasion of India whether by sea or land (pp. 31-32), and that the "only hope lies in possible invasion by the Ameer of Afghanistan" (p. 34). We have heard of German missions, of course friendly and commercial, to the Ameer, whom perhaps the Kaiser in his contemptuous estimate of Oriental character and intelligence, thought to be green and gullible. He

has had the Ameer's reply long since, and let us hope he now knows better.

This same pamphlet, to which reference has just been made, takes the reader through all the other over-sea portions of the Empire, making out that every one of them, at present tied to the apron-strings of the mother country, would rise to a life of independence with wider political freedom and privileges, and a higher development in commerce and civilisation, if they were "torn away from their political union with the British Empire" (p. 60). The bonds of connection of the British Empire depend, the writer thinks, on the system of her naval stations, by which she controls all the chief sea-routes round the main countries of the globe. The development of the English Navy in recent years and also the growing movement towards the formation of colonial auxiliary navies were directed in the first instance and chiefly against Germany, says the writer at pp. 132-33, because the rapid growth of German trade relations with the British Colonies caused uneasiness and opposition in England to German attempts at

Colonial expansion. And Germany's prospects of destroying England's grip of the sea are considered by him to be far from desperate (p. 148). Hence the War !

What an admission ! The writer compares the strength of the British Navy to the robber power of the mediæval knights, and asserts that it has enabled her to become possessed of her vast Colonies and dependencies throughout the globe in a bye-gone age. Therefore, forsooth, Germany is justified in becoming in this century of Christian charity another and a mightier naval power to do likewise, that is, according to its own admission, to dispossess by force of arms weaker peoples of their own heritage, and even to snatch from Britain some of her present territories, to which at all events she has a prescriptive right, and with which Germany has no concern. Why should England possess a world-wide empire and prosper, and not Germany ! A mental attitude which can argue thus, and not be ashamed to disclose to the nations of the earth a purpose of this nefarious character, cannot be ex-

pected to realise the barbarity of so monstrous a claim.

It must be treated as one might regard the whine of a churlish girl at the better fortune of a former friend and present rival, and for the proper prescription of its punishment one cannot do better than quote the words of the writer of the ridiculous farrago from which the above extracts are taken, which he uses in reference to New Zealand. He says of it :—“ Still too weak to stand on its own feet in international politics and economics : and if nevertheless it has come forward in the great war as an independent ally of the mother country, one would be justified in speaking of puerile impudence that calls for a whipping ” (p. 61).

It was necessary so far to take notice at some length of the contents of “ Das Britische Weltreich ” in order to make clear to the reader the main purpose with which publications of that kind are compiled and distributed broadcast over the world by the German Government. A correct notion of that feature of their literary enterprise will now enable us to

estimate at its true worth their attempt to discredit the British rule of India. The sum total of the numerous counts of their indictment is given above briefly.

GERMANY'S PERVERSION OF FREE CRITICISM PERMITTED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

Let it at once be admitted that as in all human institutions, so in the administration of India in the past two centuries there have been many defects, avoidable and unavoidable. There are at the present moment, too, different angles of vision from which the rulers and the people view important matters affecting the progress and prosperity of the country. There are legitimate aspirations which remain to be fulfilled on the one hand ; there are on the other, difficulties in the way of the official solution of problems the force of which the people deny or cannot realise. Occasionally the indiscretions of individuals of the English and of the different races of the people themselves cause irritation to other sections of the population. Further let it be granted that among the three hundred millions of them there are a few hundreds

in some corners of the vast country who may be termed irreconcilables, who, aiming at the subversion of the existing order of things, try their hands at times at a display of discontent and physical force. It will ever be thus. There is no country in the world, even under its own government, not Germany itself, where such conditions do not prevail. The very facts that a people can complain of and criticise the actions and measures of their government ; that they are taught to entertain aspirations for the broadening of their liberties and privileges ; that they can appeal with confidence to established tribunals for justice ; that where there is failure of justice they are able freely to complain on public platforms or in the press ; that they are allowed to place before responsible authorities day by day their views and schemes for their betterment or for redress of grievances ; that by far the most preponderating sections of the educated and thinking portion of the populace should themselves be willing and able to hold in check or discredit the devices of the few who favour impracticable and violent methods in preference to constitutional measures, are

in themselves the true gauge of the benefits which a well-meaning Government endeavours to bestow upon its people. These developments of national energy, more particularly when they are allowed to grow in the form of adverse criticism against the ruling power, are an evidence of the spread of education and enlightenment, of the liberty of speech, of the strengthening of the moral and physical fibre of the people, which a sympathetic government has made possible of attainment. Their very clamours for more rights and privileges and a larger participation in the control of their own affairs are fostered by methods of public policy deliberately allowed and encouraged by the government itself, such as the establishment of a common vehicle for the exchange of thought and opinions between peoples of different tongues by means of the English language. Any one acquainted with the previous history of India, and with the condition of her people, can easily detect in them the signs of a healthier national life germinating from that broad and judicious conception of the trust England accepted when the destinies of the country gradually passed

into her hands. That long catalogue of criticism, disparagement and detraction which in "*Indien unter der britischen Faust*" the Germans present in formidable array out of the mouths of British speakers and writers to bolster up their accusations is only another proof that from among Englishmen themselves would always rise advocates of India's peoples and interests when any acts of commission or omission on the part of their own Government require ventilation and comment. The very fact that the free atmosphere of Parliament and the Press of Great Britain, alien to the German mind, permitted these writers and speakers to submit to the judgment of the home public the policy and acts of the representatives of British rule in India, shows that the nation whom the Germans to-day seek to vilify as the oppressors and robbers of that country had ever been anxious to condemn any misdeeds of its own agents and to correct their errors, as the merits of the case put before it required. Is there, can there be, an administration of which the men and measures can be so perfect that no fault could be found with any of them ? In

the government of a country of the extent of India with a population of considerably over three hundred millions of human beings divided by every known variety of religion, language, customs and sentiment, by men of an alien race, there must be blunders and failures and misunderstandings. In to-day exhuming them from a buried and forgotten past, in detailing existing shortcomings in their most abhorrent and exaggerated aspect, in marshalling the attacks of dead and living English critics, the German propagandist might honestly believe that he is presenting to a horrified world a grave indictment against his hated enemy, forgetting that it is after all the noble purpose and high ideals of British rule that relatively standardised the measure of these deficiencies, the liberty of thought and speech allowed by it that made their exposure possible. No wonder he revels in this belief, for those ideals and notions of liberty are foreign to the German mind ; its conception of rule over a distant and helpless alien people is what has made German colonial enterprises a dismal failure. Servile conditions of life, repression of liberty, denial of

rights and of just treatment are the weapons used for their subjection : and it is notorious how the German frets and fumes at any reprobation, even by his own countrymen, of official views and measures, how the military and civil hierarchy of Prussia is screened against any popular criticism, and how any attempt at it is regarded and punished as lèse-majesté !

THE FALSEHOOD OF GERMAN ACCUSATIONS.

But since Germany has been at pains to categorically accuse the British nation of failure in its administration of Indian affairs, of sordid acts of misgovernment and highly culpable treatment of the people, in order to procure its condemnation at the bar of universal opinion, the right and only correct procedure for enquiry into such an indictment is to weigh in the scales what has been as against what has not been done towards the fulfilment of the obligations resting on the shoulders of that nation. No impartial and attentive reader of the foregoing pages can fail to observe that no attempt has been made

therein to pass lightly over the defects of the Indian government, or to excuse or offer any apology for them. There has been no desire and no pretext to claim for it anything approaching perfection ; and no want of admission that many rights and privileges which the people are legitimately entitled to claim, many just aspirations, much improvement in their educational and economic condition, in their industrial development, in paths leading to their enrichment and prosperity, remain to be fulfilled. In all these respects the people of India expect the British Government to rise to the height of its full responsibility. But this expectation itself postulates strong and well-grounded evidence of its recognition in the past conduct and chronicle of the administration and good reasons for the hope of its ultimate fulfilment. It is on these proofs that the rebuttal of the German denunciation must rest, and those must be briefly examined here.

The British sovereignty over India, first established through the agency of the East India Company, until its assumption by the Crown after the upheaval of 1857,

is an historical event of gradual growth. It was not the result of a conquest, hence from the first it was recognised that its exercise did not and could not imply or require that necessity of first subjugation and later control of its people which a conquering enemy has to impose on a country won at the point of the sword. In this spirit began and has been to this day continued the administration of Indian affairs at the hands of the English. They found a huge country where, in the absence of any paramount authority, sections of widely divergent races, ruling Chiefs and communities alike, were pursuing their own separate course of existence according to their own light and as suited their peculiar conditions and claims. As the idea of a conquest by the sword in relation to British sovereignty in India is mistaken, so is it equally erroneous to suppose that people in India had been, before the British advent, always at enmity among themselves and taking each other by the throat. There have been many peaceful epochs in India. It is not to be wondered at if differences of language, religion, customs, sentiments and interests in a

great continent have from time to time interrupted harmonious relations and even given rise to strife. The decay of the Mogul Empire in the seventeenth century and the rise of Hindu nationalities gave peculiar force to these elements of discord, and, as often happens in cases of domestic disagreement, the contending chiefs appealed to outsiders to arbitrate in their quarrels. The way to intervention being thus opened, the work of the English began and gradually developed until the responsibility of paramount authority devolved on them. They had to evolve a uniform system of administration, confirming the rights and possessions of the ruling chiefs as they found them, assuring to the people equality of treatment and security of life and property, protecting the poor and weak against the incursions of the rich and the strong, and establishing generally a sense of peace throughout the land. Then by a natural process followed their systematic work of internal administration, and since the German attacks, which it is the purpose of these pages to appraise at their true worth, are mainly levelled at this part of Britain's connection with India, let us briefly

examine here how it has been performed, and what features and essentials of a sound government, unknown in any former polity of the country, were first introduced.

WHAT BRITISH RULE HAS DONE FOR INDIA.

The present organisation has been a work of steady and systematic endeavour, altered and improved by increasing experience and in accordance with the changing conditions and circumstances of the country, and the following summary takes cognisance of only those prominent achievements of administration, by no means exhaustive, which distinguish the English from any previous rule.

A system of public services, for the most part based on recognised tests of qualifications has been established, which furnishes capable men for the duties of the numerous departments of the State. It is free from nepotism, influence, or partiality in selection.

For the defence of the Indian Empire and preservation of internal peace, a thoroughly equipped army consisting

roundly of 75,000 British and 160,000 Indian troops is maintained, its maritime defence being undertaken by the British Navy. This provision has made the whole country on all its vast frontier free from aggression by land and sea, and absolutely immune from any danger of internal disturbances and internecine conflicts. A sense of complete security, unknown in previous times, prevails now in every corner of the Indian Empire.

The finances of the country are the care not only of an organised Department, but the Supreme and subordinate governments are bound by well-defined rules to regulate the income and expenditure of every province and district. Budgets are prepared and publicly discussed in Councils, allocations are made for works of public utility such as railways and canals, besides disbursements for the current expenditure of the official services, and educational and medical institutions. During the last 35 years there has been a steady expansion of the finances, without increase in the rates of internal taxation and without large borrowings. Apart from the debt

incurred for reproductive works, such as railways and irrigation, the interest on which does not fall on the tax-payer, as it is paid out of their large net profits, the public debt of India to-day (1914) is only about £12,750,000. In the period under calculation, large expenditure on famine relief and protective railways, and irrigation and public works, was met from the current revenues.

In the last fifty years both the income and expenditure have increased more than three-fold. This is not the place to enter into considerations of the incidence of taxation, or of the allocation of revenue raised for the provision of administrative and national expenditure. As in all prosperous countries, and notably in Great Britain itself, both have a natural tendency to increase in India. In regard to the general financial policy governing the income and expenditure of any country, there will always be differences of opinion among individuals. But it cannot be controverted that the growth, *pari passu*, on both sides of national finance is the sure indication of the development of the productive

power of the people on the one hand, and on the other of the expanding improvement in the conditions of life which they need and demand. It has the same significance as the rise of wages has in relation to the increase of prices, and both these economic factors are present to-day in the life of India as in those of all other progressive and prosperous countries.

The judicial system of India is another and perhaps the most excellent feature of British rule. Its very credit with the people, that which has reconciled them most to it, is the confidence they have in the English sense and methods of justice. The Penal Codes and Codes of Civil and Criminal Procedure, comprehensive, intelligible, and adapted to the conditions of the people, by which the administration of justice is generally regulated, are superior to those of many other countries, and surpassed by none. Other enactments and regulations suited to the social requirements of certain classes of people, and peculiar tribes, as well as laws relating to municipalities and other public bodies have long since been

formulated and are constantly promoted or modified. The competence and character of the judges and officials entrusted with judicial functions are as a rule unimpeachable. As in the judiciary, so in the Legislative bodies, the people have been by Acts of Parliament allowed for years past a fair share of the seats, a share which is being enlarged periodically in response to their aspirations.

The net-work of railways and canals, stupendous engineering works such as bridges, roads, and reservoirs, public buildings for hospitals, universities, schools and museums of varying dimensions, with which cities and towns are provided, are not only monuments of British genius, but proofs of that tranquility, that progress of trade and commerce, and that multiplication of the resources of the country which have followed in the wake of British rule. The trigonometrical, topographical, geological, archæological, and cadastral surveys ; scientific experiments in agriculture, the preservation of forests, increase in cultivation, the introduction of staples unknown in previous years such as tea,

coffee, and cinchona ; drainage systems in towns, sanitation throughout villages and expert medical help for the women confined in zenanas and behind the purdah,—all these and numerous other ever multiplying and expanding accessories to the physical and material improvement of a nation would not have been possible unless initiated or fostered by a government imbued with a real sense of its obligations to a people whose fortunes and destiny it is in its power to make or to mar.

PROJECTS FOR COMBATING FAMINE AND PLAGUE.

It would be impossible to dilate, within the limit of these pages, on the benefits that have accrued to India by these operations. But as an illustration, taken at random, it is worth while noting a few particulars relating to irrigation works. Agriculture is the pursuit of eighty per cent. of India's population, while the vagaries of the monsoon and other climatic conditions expose large districts to the risk of failure of crops. Again, there are immense tracts which for want of water had always remained uncultivated. To

remedy these drawbacks, than which scarcely anything can be conceived more disastrous to a people whose livelihood depends on the soil, a highly efficient and expanding scheme of irrigation has been wisely pursued by Government for years past. It had the sanction of past times, for Hindu and Mahomedan rulers had inaugurated similar projects in their time. But the construction was not on so extensive a scale, nor had it the same element of expansion and efficiency, and certainly not the same aid of engineering skill, as are contained in the British system of irrigation. Under the East India Company up to 1858 about half a dozen projects had been begun, a couple of them being partly open, which supplied water to a million-and-a-half acres. Since then and up to 1914, at a cost of £45,500,000 no less than 24,914,000 acres of land have been brought under irrigation, ensuring to cultivators an income of fifty-four million pounds from the crops raised by it. The inception, the method of construction, and the results of such an undertaking, at all events on so stupendous a scale, were made possible under British administration. For a

wonder our German friends have not included this among the hardships conferred by it on India !

In connection with the allusion made above to the medical and sanitary policy fostered by the Indian administration, it might be pertinent to deal here with the bogey of famine and plague which the German propagandist has conjured up to help him in attacking the British nation. From the way in which he presents it to the reader, it might appear as if there had been no such visitations in India in the pre-British period, as if a Providence angered at the assumption of sovereignty there by the British had created these new afflictions in order to make their work difficult and their name unpopular there. In the absence of statistics or proper official records in old times there is wanting any reliable information of the failures of rains and crops, or of the prevalence of diseases like plague and cholera in large districts. Still, that these adversities periodically befell the country, and that infectious and other epidemics were not only of frequent occurrence, but became chronic for long periods, from

times immemorial, is an acknowledged fact, and that they devastated towns and villages wholesale may be ascertained from inscriptions and folklore of old times which are still extant. In those days, there was no systematised means of arresting their ruthless progress ; no organisation for relief on a large scale ; no facilities even for the transport of grain to the sufferers from any distance ; and from Hindu and Mohammedan writings and legends, it has been proved that severe famines had prevailed in India from ancient times, from a period anterior to the age of the Ramayana ; and many of them within recent centuries had lasted over twelve years, from the effects of which large districts had been depopulated and utterly ruined. Not that the rulers of those days and their officers in the affected provinces were heartless or did not try to give relief : but the means were wanting to cope with the huge calamities. Under the British administration, it became possible for the first time to presage in time by meteorological observations the imminence of scarcity and famine owing to failure of rains. So soon as the danger is apprehended, prepara-

tions for the carriage of grain from long distances, relief works, a regular system for the equal distribution of available food, medical aid, and every means within the compass of human ingenuity to combat the disaster are set on foot. Financial provision and well-planned regulations with that object are now part of the curriculum of Indian administration. Likewise for meeting the outbreaks of plague, cholera, malaria, and other pestilent maladies to which the country is liable, the most expert medical aid and municipal and sanitary measures are constantly provided. The State servants, both British and Indian, are scientifically trained and their duties prescribed for the task of immediately arresting these ravages and succouring the afflicted. Nothing could exceed the zeal, energy, and sympathy with which they discharge their duties in this respect, not unoften at the sacrifice of their health and lives. Cavilling at the British in connection with these matters, the German writers have simply scandalised the people of India, and heartlessly trifled with their feelings by exploiting their sufferings for

the nefarious purpose of venting their own malignity against the English.

WHAT BRITAIN'S HELP MEANS TO INDIA.

But it may possibly be argued that in the period during which the British have held sway over India, that country, left to herself, would have perhaps achieved all that is claimed to be accomplished by British agency ; and that she might, concurrently with the march of science and invention, the growth of liberty and other democratic forces, the increasing facilities of communication and intercourse with the nations of the earth which have themselves attained to their present development, have carved out a position of complete independence and forged for herself a more affluent and dignified and powerful status. A conjecture of this kind is possible in the case of a country which, while it had its ancient civilisation like that of India, was also a single country with a homogeneous population, with no such fundamental diversities of tongue, religions, creeds, interests, even sentiments as have existed in India from

time immemorial, and if, above all, there had been over her an established unchallenged Sovereignty or at least overlordship claiming allegiance from subordinate chiefs of minor territories. It was the absence of these conditions, in fact, enduring over a great period of her former history, that permitted the penetration and subsequent settlement of the British there, with the responsibility of welding the country's component elements into a unit capable of ultimately taking its proper station among self-governing dominions within the ambit of a world-wide Empire. So far as human eye can see that is the goal towards which India moves, which her people have fixed for her, and which the British Government is helping her to reach. She is persuaded that if she had fallen under any other domination, her destiny would have been moulded in quite another fashion. She has watched and studied the treatment by powerful countries of their foreign subjects ; the arrogance, the cupidity, the inhumanity displayed by the German in his dealings with weaker peoples have not escaped her attention, and it is the firm conviction of her myriad children

that if by any mischance their lot had fallen with him instead of with the English, they would have been kept, by every human device and of set and declared purpose, in a state of helotry, unfit to rise to any position of power and authority in their own country, to have any voice in her governance, or to entertain any hope of amelioration.

GERMANY'S DELUSION.

Perhaps the German does not know that this is an axiom of faith with the people of India, and in the fond hope that in the hour of Britain's difficulty they would rely on his help and succour to get free of England's domination, he has undertaken the foolhardy attempt to wean them from their allegiance. He has spread his net wide ; he has subsidised some malcontents, sent emissaries to border tribes and to Afghanistan, spread poisonous literature, told tales of England's weakness and his own prowess. He has appealed to the people of India in all these ways, and in their name and on their behalf to neutral nations, against the alleged misrule of their country by

England. He has tried to incite the Moslems of India and of the world, alleging that the war he has brought upon England is a struggle for the protection of Islam, of which Hadji Kaiser William has taken upon himself the *rôle* of guardian and defender. These are manœuvres and pretensions the futility and hollowness of which it would not require much effort to expose, if there was any fear of their receiving credence. But, as remarked above, the attitude and assurances of the Ameer of Afghanistan have already proved that the blandishments of the Hun have fallen upon deaf ears : all India has more than repelled them. She remembers the contemptuous behaviour of the Crown Prince and his suite during their visit there towards her Chiefs and people. She has a lively appreciation of the Teutonic estimate of her men as laid bare by the German contention of the illegality of employing her troops in war, on the ground that international lawyers have prohibited the use of "savages" in civilised warfare ; *ergo* they are "savages."

GERMANY REGARDS INDIANS AND MOSLEMS AS "SAVAGES."

"Die Farbigen Hilfsvölker der Engländer und Französen" (the coloured auxiliaries of the English and French) is a laboured essay by Dr. Hans Delius to prove on the alleged authority of English, French, Russian, and neutral jurists the international illegality of the employment of Indian troops by the English, and of the Turcos by the French in the present war. But the whole attempt is misleading and wide of the mark. International lawyers have, no doubt, advocated the prohibition of the use of "savages" in civilised war, but been in favour of their employment if they are disciplined and under the responsible control of civilised officers. The case considered by them is purely that of savages and barbarians out of the pale of human civilisation. And yet the German writer dishonestly twists the numerous authorities he quotes in his fifteen closely printed pages as if they had any reference to the British Indian troops, the sons of an ancient and highly developed civilisation, thoroughly disciplined in the art and methods of

European warfare. The people of India, from whose proudest races these troops are furnished, were civilized and cultured long anterior to the period when, according to Julius Cæsar, Tacitus, and other Roman writers, the Teutonic savages roamed the German forests. Cæsar describes them as *feri ac barbari*. Tacitus says they had not even an alphabet. Gibbon calls them a herd of savages. Again at page four of his book Dr. Delius uses the expression "the African and *Mahomedan Turcos*," including them in the category of "savages." And Dr. Delius is the authorised spokesman of the Teutonic power which has the impudence to advance its kind concern for the people of India and its Islamophil susceptibility as its titles to win them and the Moslem world on its side ! The fact is that even when, in his hour of desperate need and despised position among other nationalities he is driven to tout for the support of Islamic communities and to instigate the people of India to become a thorn in the side of Great Britain, the German cannot divest himself of his arrogance and racial and colour prejudice. In his blind estimate of his own superiority he

persuades himself that Oriental intelligence is incapable of detecting his adroit chicanery and friendly dissimulation. They are not so simple as perhaps he has already found out by now to his cost. The Moslem world, and particularly the sixty millions of Indian Mohammedans, have in spite of the fatuous Turkish submission to Prussian control, spurned the German's advances, and four times that number of the remaining Indian population have combined with them, not merely by word of mouth, but by the consecration of blood and lives, by surrendering all their resources, by suppressing for the time being all their interests and differences, in a whole-hearted co-operation to win victory for British arms.

THE FAITH OF INDIA.

It is the consummation of a belief, a trust and a hope engendered by long years of contact with the British nation. It is the result of a deep study of the history of other nations. It is, in fact, the acceptance of a destiny to which of their own free will and reasoned argument the people of India deliberately

resign themselves. They believe that their own fate is intertwined with that of the British race, and have faith in the promises and pledges given by it to protect their national interests and promote their amelioration in that spirit of sympathy which under similar circumstances would never have been extended to them by any other ruling race. The earlier Charters securing to them "equality of status, of rights and of duties" with the rest of the British subjects, confirmed and amplified by the Proclamation of 1858, when the good Queen Victoria, of happy memory, assumed direct sway over them, and emphatically ratified by her successors, have proved veritable milestones in the path they are content to tread. Even when they have felt that their pace has been restrained, that British statesmanship has occasionally failed to discharge towards them those obligations which the charters guaranteed to them, and acute discord on matters of policy or treatment has arisen between them and members of the administration, they have regarded them merely in the light of family differences to be settled among themselves

with which nobody else has any concern, and with regard to which any help or criticism offered by outsiders is utterly repugnant to them. They have told this to Germany by laughing to scorn its manifold stratagems to create difficulty for the English by means of inflammatory literature, by supplying money to some discontented persons and otherwise engineering revolts, by suborning men in Indian regiments and other such infamous tricks. All such machinations, if they had any effect at all, only served to stimulate that energy for the "defence of the Empire" and all that that phrase portends, which has been displayed throughout all parts of the Indian Continent, under the flag of Britain and under the sway of the Rajahs alike, from the first moment war was declared. There was no waiting for a call, no faltering, no thought of conditions of service or reward, of compensation for loss of life or property, nor any rankling sense of past wrongs or hope of future betterment, when her princes and people instantaneously seized the opportunity of manifesting their love and devotion to the British Throne. They seized that fate-

ful moment to claim their proper place in the Empire in the unflinching faith that under its protecting ægis and the ever broadening scope of its constitution alone can they freely foster those rights, privileges and liberties, which are the inalienable heritage of its citizens. During the two years through which this titanic struggle has raged, India like all other dominions under the Union Jack has suffered ; her blood has been spilt on the battlefields of Europe, of Asia, of Africa. She has noted the varying fortunes of the war day by day. Germany has spared no pains to shake India's allegiance, and has even dangled before her people the phantom of a happy future if they would only help it to destroy the enemy whose alleged deeds of misrule it has unstintingly poured in their ears, and thereby invoked their verdict. In spite of all these trials and temptations there is not a responsible and thoughtful person in India who is disposed to repent of the part her inhabitants collectively and individually took upon themselves to play by the side of Britain and against her foes, not one who has the least faith in Germany's pretensions and professions

of sympathy for them, or who is not prepared to assert that, with all its limitations and deficiencies, the rule of Britain has been, and will in future be in an increasing degree, a blessing to the three hundred million human beings owning its sway.

THE VERDICT OF INDIA.

How spontaneous these universal sentiments are can be gathered by the utterances delivered by the acknowledged leaders of the communities of India the moment war broke out. These men, whose lives had been spent in the advocacy of the rights of their countrymen, which incessantly demanded criticism of the Government, proclaimed from one end of India to the other their gratitude to the British race and their inviolate faith in the beneficence of its rule. That veteran patriot, Dadabhai Naoroji, in a memorable manifesto issued to the people said :— “ If ever India expects to attain again her former glory on the advanced character and scale of modern British civilisation, of liberty, humanity, justice and all that is good, great, and divine, it shall be at the hands of the British people and with

the British people as self-governing members of the British Empire.” Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, a representative of Bengal leaders, proved in a telling brochure why India was heart and soul with Great Britain in this present fight in a righteous cause. Sir P. M. Mehta, occupying a similar position in Bombay, declared at a public meeting there, attended by thousands of its cosmopolitan inhabitants, that “in the presence of the solemn situation they were all merged in the one proud denomination of loyal and devoted subjects of the British Crown to lay at the feet of their august Sovereign their unswerving fealty, unshaken allegiance and enthusiastic homage, remembering that they owed sacred duties and holy obligations to that British rule under whose auspices their lofty destinies were being moulded for over a century and under whose wise and provident and righteous statesmanship the welfare, happiness and prosperity of the country are being incessantly enhanced.”

In the face of such pronouncements by thousands of leading men, endorsed and acclaimed by the millions of India’s

people, how ridiculous seem the efforts of the German official propagandists to accuse the British of having misgoverned them, in the hope of alienating their allegiance. It ill becomes a nation whose agents have massacred in cold blood and extirpated the tribe of Herreros ; which has even nearer home blotted out in Alsace Lorraine the very language of the natives and killed or imprisoned thousands of them ; whose rapacity in its African colonies has already had its reward in its being practically driven out in two short years from a great part of that territory ; and whose harrowing acts of cruelty in the different spheres of the present war will for ages to come make its name a by-word at the mention of which humanity will quail,—it ill becomes a nation with such antecedents to talk of the oppression and failure of British rule in India. In its desperation, and in the mad indulgence of its avowed hatred of the English, it has tried to establish this count of its indictment before the tribunal of nations, hoping that the only competent testimony admissible in the case—that of the people who are sup-

posed to have been the victims of the alleged misrule—could be suborned by its simulated sympathy, and that they would hail it as their deliverer from the thrall of a foreign yoke. That hope has been utterly falsified. The people of India have seen through and through the motives of the diabolical propaganda, and they scout the foul charges the proof or disproof of which must depend on their own verdict.

That Verdict is that the destinies of their country have been directed in the paths of progress and prosperity by the government which British genius and British statesmanship have established in India, that they are proud of being British citizens, and that it is only by the right and title of that citizenship that they hope to revive the ancient glory of their mother-land, taking their proper place in the Comity of Nations side by side with the other children of the British Empire.

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